

Mr. James Steinberg

United States Deputy Secretary of State, met with students at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC), Herzliya before President Obama's speech

James Steinberg, United States Deputy Secretary of State, held a discussion with graduate students of the Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya (IDC), before President Obama's Middle East speech.

Steinberg shared the experience of his political career under three presidents: Carter, Clinton and Obama and spoke about the importance of the recent changes unfolding in the Middle East.

He spoke of the difficulty of predicting events such as those enveloping the Middle East but added that predicting them is not the main issue. The challenge, he stressed, is to understand what can be done and how to aid the process and the formation of change, to join this new partner and attempt to encourage the new regime to continue reforms. On the one hand, these are times of change and on the other, times of great uncertainty, but the opportunity for change must determine the manner in which these new regional elements are approached.

Most of the demonstrations currently occurring in the Arab World call for change. They do not cry out against the US or Israel and this is why these movements must be encouraged. As human beings we must encourage such changes. In the long run, the more we encourage progress in these places, the more they will be comfortable with receiving Western support.